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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/688,715	10/16/2000	John J. Rofrano	SOM920000011US1	2993

7590 12/27/2004

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EXAMINER

FADOK, MARK A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3625

DATE MAILED: 12/27/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/688,715	Applicant(s) ROFRANO, JOHN J.	
	Examiner Mark Fadok	Art Unit 3625	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 October 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-39 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-39 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Applicant's Reply

The examiner is in receipt of applicant's response to office action mailed 6/24/2004, which was received 10/14/2004. Acknowledgment is made that no amendments were made to the instant claims leaving claims 1-39 as pending in the instant application. Applicant's arguments have been carefully considered, but were not found to be persuasive; therefore, the previous rejection is restated below:

Priority

This application repeats a substantial portion of prior Applications No. 08/948,719, filed October 10, 1997, and adds and claims additional disclosure not presented in the prior application. Since this application names an inventor or inventors named in the prior application, it may constitute a continuation-in-part of the prior application. Should applicant desire to obtain the benefit of the filing date of the prior application, attention is directed to 35 U.S.C. 120 and 37 CFR 1.78.

Examiner's Note

Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers or figures in the references as applied to the claims below for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures

may apply as well. It is respectfully requested from the applicant, in preparing the responses, to fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

**Claims 1-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by
McCann et al (5,963,939).**

In regards to claims 1-39, McCann teaches all the features of the instant claims. For example, McCann includes a very high level set of software objects for obtaining information from a user and searching the database of products and services to provide the optimum solution. Rather than a hard-coded software tree for branching among a fixed set of questions, McCann is driven by the data objects, which themselves invoke other objects that adjust a solution according to the available product information and user responses to previous questions. Therefore, as the user provides information to the various question blocks, the exemplary embodiment of the present invention dynamically searches the

database for possible solutions. The search for solutions among the database drives further question blocks (ranked questions with ranking not dependant on previous questions) for obtaining still more information from the user, to narrow down the selection of possible solutions. Rather than obtaining information in technical jargon, the exemplary embodiment of the present invention uses question blocks which prompt the user for information in the user's own vocabulary. This high level, data-driven, object oriented approach allows tremendous expandability and flexibility on the part of the exemplary embodiment of the present invention (col 3, lines 30-50).

Response to Arguments

Applicant argues that McCann does not teach selecting electronic catalog questions in order of ranked importance, which are independent of any previous answers provided by the consumer. FIGs 58A-58V clearly show questions in ranked order, which are determined prior to the supplying the customer with a question. Therefore, as recited in claim 1, the question ranking is independent of the answers provided by the customer.

Applicant argues that McCann does not teach presenting the highest ranked question, receiving an answer to the highest ranked question, and limiting product choices based on the answer to the highest ranked question. McCann clearly teaches this claim element, for instance, in regards to FIG 58A, if the customer's response to any of the question prompts the system with a zero, then product choices would be

limited since no information would be provided for that item that the customer did not need.

In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., that the claim does not permit branching to other questions within the question procedure) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

Applicant argues that the evaluation process is implemented subsequent to receiving an answer to a particular questions and not subsequent to a series of question. As discusses above FIG 58A asks a number 1 ranked question, from this question product choices are limited after the response is received, Take for example FIG 58D, where the product choice for a server operating system is not offered if the customer chooses 0 for the servers in question 58A. Therefore the product choice for servers is limited after the presentation and response to a particular question.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Mark Fadok** whose telephone number is **(703) 605-4252**. The examiner can normally be reached Monday thru Thursday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, **Wynn Coggins** can be reached on **(703) 308-1344**.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner for Patents

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or faxed to:

(703) 872-9306 [Official communications; including
After Final communications labeled
"Box AF"]

(703) 746-7206 [Informal/Draft communications, labeled
"PROPOSED" or "DRAFT"]

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA, 7th floor receptionist.



Mark Fadok

Patent Examiner